

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
November 29 - December 5, 2012

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1. [20-Year-Old Law Expands Fight against Weapons of Mass Destruction](#) (12-04-2012)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama marked the 20th anniversary of landmark legislation to dismantle weapons of mass destruction and said the prevention of nuclear terrorism around the world will remain one of his top national security priorities as the U.S. commander-in-chief.

Speaking at the National Defense University in Washington December 3, Obama said the 1992 Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program, named for former Georgia Senator Sam Nunn and Indiana Senator Richard Lugar, has set an example of partnership between the United States and other countries in securing all nuclear, biological and chemical materials that could otherwise be used in a terrorist attack.

Originally a partnership between the United States and countries of the former Soviet Union, the CTR program has since expanded to include more than 80 nations.

“Missile by missile, warhead by warhead, shell by shell, we're putting a bygone era behind us. ... We're moving closer to the future that we seek, a future where these weapons never threaten our children again, a future where we know the security and peace of a world without nuclear weapons,” Obama said.

The president said it took “decades and extraordinary sums of money to build those arsenals. And it's going to take decades and continued investments to dismantle them,” while they continue to pose a threat to the public.

“There are still terrorists and criminal gangs doing everything they can to get their hands on them. And make no mistake: If they get it, they will use it, potentially killing hundreds of thousands of innocent people, perhaps triggering a global crisis,” he said.

Speaking earlier in the day, former Senator Nunn warned that “complacency is the biggest danger we face,” and people around the world need to recognize the continued threats they face and the need to resolve them.

“I think we all have to back up and ask a question. If a nuclear weapon went off in a city in America or anywhere else on the globe, two questions: What would we wish we'd done to prevent it, and the second, why don't we do it now? And that's the kind of framework I think we have to keep emphasizing because of the stakes involved. But we have to have a lot of other countries asking the same question,” he said.

The challenge posed by weapons of mass destruction “is going to be with us for a long, long time. ... It's a dynamic subject that we have to respond to and we have to get partnerships all over the globe,” Nunn said.

Senator Lugar said the United States is working with governments around the world in setting up networks among military and government officials, laboratories and other experts to cooperate in areas of surveillance and research and in “anticipation of things that may occur.”

“This is an ongoing process in the world, for our safety, for the safety of the world,” he said.

2. NATO Approves Turkey's Request for Patriot Missiles (12-04-2012)

By Nick Simeone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4, 2012 – NATO foreign ministers have agreed to Turkey's request for Patriot anti-missile batteries to defend the country against possible airstrikes from neighboring Syria.

The decision came during the first of two days of meetings at alliance headquarters in Brussels, with ministers saying the goal is to “defend the population and territory of Turkey and contribute to the de-escalation of the crisis along the alliance's border.”

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen described the situation along Turkey's southeast border with Syria as one of “grave concern,” adding that NATO stands in full solidarity with Turkey.

The Patriot missiles are expected to be supplied by the United States, Germany and the Netherlands and would remain under the operational command of the alliance's supreme allied commander for Europe.

The decision comes as the civil war in Syria intensifies and amid new concerns in Washington over the status of the Syrian government's stocks of chemical and biological weapons. In recent weeks, Syrian rockets and shells have landed on the Turkish side of the border, killing several people, a

development that Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has said raises concerns that the Syrian conflict could spill over into other countries in the region.

The Turkish government has supported Syria's opposition, and as an alliance member had requested that NATO provide the U.S.-built Patriot air defense system to deter further threats to its territory. NATO officials stress that use of the missiles will be purely defensive. Rasmussen emphasized that the system will in no way be used to support a no-fly zone over Syria, as some have proposed.

NATO's decision to approve Turkey's request comes a day after the United States said it was growing increasingly concerned that Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime might be considering using its stocks of chemical weapons against its own people. Yesterday, President Barack Obama issued a direct warning to the Syrian leader that any use of chemical or biological weapons would be unacceptable.

"There will be consequences, and you will be held accountable," Obama said.

Related Articles:

[Obama Warns Syria against Using Chemical, Biological Weapons](#)

[Panetta: DOD Works with Jordan, Turkey on Syria Repercussions](#)

3. Obama Warns Syria Against Using Chemical, Biological Weapons (12-03-2012)

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3, 2012 – President Barack Obama today warned Syria's Bashar Assad regime that the use of chemical and biological weapons would be "unacceptable."

Speaking at the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Symposium at the National Defense University here, Obama addressed concerns of the use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in Syria.

"Today, I want to make it absolutely clear to Assad and those under his command that the world is watching," he said. "The use of chemical weapons is, and would be, totally unacceptable. And if you make the tragic mistake of using these weapons, there where be consequences, and you will be held accountable."

The president said it has been critical to continue investing in threat reduction programs over the past four years of his administration.

"We simply cannot allow the 21st century to be darkened by the worst weapons of the 20th century," Obama said. "And even as we make some very tough fiscal choices, we're going to keep investing in these programs, because our national security depends on it."

The president noted even after the destruction of thousands of missiles, elimination of bombers and submarines and deactivation of warheads, much work remains to be done.

"There's still much too much material -- nuclear, chemical, biological -- being stored without enough protection," he said. "There are still terrorists and criminal gangs doing everything they can to get their hands on it."

If these criminals get these weapons, they will use them, potentially killing hundreds of thousands of innocent people and perhaps triggering a global crisis, the president said.

“This is why I continue to believe that nuclear terrorism remains one of the greatest threats to global security,” he added. “And why working to prevent nuclear terrorism is going to remain one of my top national security priorities as long as I have the privilege of being president of the United States.”

The president emphasized that the United States must sustain efforts across the government to strengthen threat reduction programs such as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, which he called “one of our most important national security programs.”

“This is why we haven’t just sustained programs like Nunn-Lugar over the past four years,” Obama said. “We’ve worked with all of you to strengthen it, expanding it to some 80 nations, far beyond the old Soviet Union - moving ahead with the destruction of chemical weapons - partnering with others, countries from Africa to Asia and global health organizations to prevent the spread of deadly diseases and bioterrorism.”

The work ahead will not be easy, Obama said. “It took decades and extraordinary sums of money to build those arsenals,” he explained. “It’s going to take decades and continued investments to dismantle them.”

Obama also said while this painstaking work rarely makes headlines, it is “absolutely vital to our national security and to our global interests.”

“Missile by missile, warhead by warhead, shell by shell, we’re putting a bygone era behind us,” he said. “Inspired by Sam Nunn and Dick Lugar, we’re moving closer to the future we seek -- a future where these weapons never threaten our children again, and a future where we know the security and peace of a world without nuclear weapons.”

The president also told the audience that the United States will continue to support the “legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people” by engaging with the opposition and providing them with humanitarian aid and by working for a transition to a Syria that’s free of the Assad regime.

Full text:

[Obama on Reducing Threat of Nuclear Weapons](#) (12-03-2012)

Related Articles:

[Panetta Awards Nunn, Lugar Highest Civilian Defense Honors](#)

4. Czech Republic, U.S. United Against Syrian Chemical Weapons (12-03-2012)

Washington — The United States is “certainly planning to take action” if Syria’s government uses chemical weapons to subdue rebellion, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said December 3 while in Prague.

Questioned about media reports suggesting increased activity at Syrian chemical weapons sites, Clinton declined any direct comment. But she did repeat the administration’s earlier warning that “This is a redline for the United States.”

Speaking in broader terms about the almost two-year-old civil uprising in Syria, Clinton said the actions of the Syrian government have been “reprehensible” and “tragic” for Syria’s people.

Clinton was appearing at a press conference with Czech Republic Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg in her first stop on a four-nation European trip. The situation in Syria was among the issues discussed by the two diplomats.

“We are certainly united in our warning and condemnation, and will stand with the international community in a united way should there be any evidence that the Assad regime has ignored international opinion on this important matter,” Clinton said.

On bilateral issues, Clinton said she and Schwarzenberg also discussed the two countries' shared commitment to promoting democracy and human rights around the world, security cooperation in Afghanistan, and collaboration in energy security and energy diversification.

“Czech and American scientists are already collaborating extensively in this field, including our effort to develop the first joint civil nuclear center that the United States will have with a NATO ally,” Clinton said.

With a broader perspective, Clinton said, the U.S. and European Union cooperation on energy matters can have an impact on issues from security to climate change.

Belgium, Ireland and Northern Ireland are the next stops on Clinton’s itinerary. She remains in Europe through December 7.

5. Clinton: U.S. Remains Engaged in Middle East Peace Efforts (12-01-2012)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in a November 30 address in Washington, stressed the importance of peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians and steps forward in those negotiations as crucial elements for Middle East peace.

“We have to convince Palestinians that direct negotiations with Israel represent not just the best but the only path to the independent state they deserve,” Clinton said in a speech at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, a Washington-based public policy research center.

“America supports the goal of a Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security with Israel. But this week’s vote at the U.N. won’t bring Palestinians any closer. It may bring new challenges for the United Nations system and for Israel,” she said.

On November 29, the U.N. General Assembly voted to upgrade the status of the Palestinian Authority from nonmember observer entity to nonmember observer state. The tally was 138 members voting yes, nine members (including the United States) voting no and 41 members abstaining.

Clinton cautioned that all sides engaged in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process need to consider carefully the path ahead. Palestinian leaders, Clinton added, must ask what unilateral action can really accomplish for their people in the drive to create a secure, democratic Palestinian state.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas took a step in the wrong direction at the U.N. General Assembly on November 29, Clinton said. "We opposed his resolution. But we also need to see that the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank still offers the most compelling alternative to rockets and permanent resistance," she added.

Clinton said Israel needs to help those committed to peace deliver for their people "in the here and now." Clinton also praised President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad for their achievements in the West Bank — making the streets safe, bringing a measure of peace and overhauling governing institutions.

And Clinton said the announcement by Israeli leaders on November 30 that construction of additional settlements and housing in the East Jerusalem would commence "set back the cause of a negotiated peace."

Israelis, Palestinians, the United States and those partners engaged in the peace process "need to work together to find a path forward in negotiations that can finally deliver on a two-state solution. That must remain our goal," she said.

Clinton said the United States is hoping that a brokered cease-fire between the Israelis and Hamas in the Gaza Strip will hold as this would lessen tensions across the region. The equation for peace, Clinton said, includes demonstrating the benefits of cooperation and coexistence for everyone.

And on other challenges confronting the broader Middle East, Clinton said the nations of the region and the entire international community must prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

"This is a commitment that President Obama has made and repeated because we know very well the Iranian regime already exports terrorism, not only to Israel's doorstep, but across the world," she said.

The United States sees Iran bringing repression to Syria, which has become embroiled in protracted civil strife, she said, and "we see Iran brutalizing their own people."

A nuclear Iran is a threat not only to Israel, but to all nations, and risks "opening the floodgates" on nuclear proliferation around the world, Clinton added.

"When it comes to Iran's nuclear threat, the United States does not have a policy of containment. We have a policy of prevention, built on the dual tracks of pressure and engagement, while keeping all options on the table," she said.

[Clinton's Remarks to Saban Center for Middle East Policy](#) (11-30-2012)

6. State Dept. Fact Sheet on New START Treaty Aggregate Numbers (11-30-2012)

U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance

New START Treaty Aggregate Numbers of Strategic Offensive Arms

Data in this Fact Sheet comes from the biannual exchange of data required by the Treaty. It contains data declared current as of September 1, 2012. Data will be updated each six month period after entry into force of the Treaty.[1]

Category of Data	United States of America	Russian Federation
Deployed ICBMs, Deployed SLBMs, and Deployed Heavy Bombers	806	491
Warheads on Deployed ICBMs, on Deployed SLBMs, and Nuclear Warheads Counted for Deployed Heavy Bombers	1722	1499
Deployed and Non-deployed Launchers of ICBMs, Deployed and Non-deployed Launchers of SLBMs, and Deployed and Non-deployed Heavy Bombers	1034	884

United States of America Data Effective Date: September 1, 2012

ICBMs and ICBM Launchers	MM-III	PK	Total
Deployed ICBMs	449	0	449
Non-deployed ICBMs	263	58	321
Deployed and Non-deployed Launchers of ICBMs	506	51	557
Deployed Launchers of ICBMs	449	0	449
Non-deployed Launchers of ICBMs	57	51	108
Test Launchers	6	1	7

SLBMs and SLBM Launchers	Trident II	Total
Deployed SLBMs	239	239
Non-deployed SLBMs	180	180
Deployed and Non-deployed Launchers of SLBMs	336	336
Deployed Launchers of SLBMs	239	239
Non-deployed Launchers of SLBMs	97	97
Test Launchers	0	0

Heavy Bombers	B-2A	B-52G	B-52H	Total
Deployed Heavy Bombers	10	30	78	118
Non-deployed Heavy Bombers	10	0	13	23
Test Heavy Bombers	1	0	2	3
Heavy Bombers Equipped for Non-nuclear Armaments	0	0	0	0

[1] The complete unclassified data for the United States is available upon request from the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC.

7. Panetta Outlines Objectives For Troops in Post-2014 Afghanistan (11-29-2012)

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29, 2012 – Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta today laid out three missions for the post-2014 troop presence in Afghanistan, and also made it clear the U.S. is not arming rebels fighting to topple the Assad regime in Syria.

During a joint press conference here with visiting Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, Panetta was asked what the focus in Afghanistan should be following the transition to Afghan-led security.

“The fundamental mission in Afghanistan is to establish a nation that can secure and govern itself and ensure that al-Qaida, never again, finds a safe haven within Afghanistan from which to conduct attacks on the United States or any other country,” he said.

The goal for remaining troops, Panetta said, is an enduring presence that will direct itself towards three important missions.

“One is obviously counterterrorism to ensure that we continue to go after whatever al-Qaida targets remain in Afghanistan,” he said.

“Although we clearly have had an impact on their presence in Afghanistan, the fact is that they continue to show up, and intelligence continues to indicate that they are looking for some kind of capability to be able to go into Afghanistan as well,” Panetta said. He noted that forces have to be continually vigilant to protect against the terrorist group’s resurgence.

“So that’s going to be the fundamental thrust of the CT effort in the enduring presence,” Panetta said. “We also are going to continue to have a train-and-assist mission to help develop the capability of the Afghan Army.”

“The third mission will be to continue to provide some enabling capability so that we can provide the support needed for our forces as well,” he said.

Panetta noted the necessary troop levels to accomplish these missions is “exactly what’s being discussed” now.

In addition to discussing Afghanistan, the defense secretary also re-emphasized that the United States has had no involvement in equipping rebel forces in Syria with weapons or surface-to-air missiles.

“With regards to Syria, let me say, unequivocally, that we have not provided any of those kinds of missiles to the opposition forces located in Syria,” Panetta said. “We do provide ... non-lethal assistance to the opposition.”

“We obviously are continuing to work on humanitarian relief to the refugees that have been impacted,” he added.

Panetta noted the U.S., with assistance from Israel and other countries in the region, also continues to monitor fighting in areas with chemical or biological weapons sites.

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Our main focus right now, he said, has been working with other countries to try to provide whatever assistance we can to the opposition so it can ultimately become not only an effective force, but one that will be “needed once Assad comes down.”

Biographies:

[Leon E. Panetta](#)

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